



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 114th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 161

WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 21, 2015

No. 10

Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal God, we love You. You are our rock, fortress, and deliverer. You have provided protection for our Nation, surrounding it with the shield of Your favor. How worthy You are of our praise.

Strengthen our lawmakers for today's journey. Give them strong hearts, sound minds, and diligent hands. May they do their ethical best to represent You, joining their plans to Your will in order to accomplish Your purposes. Incline their hearts to Your wisdom and love as You keep them on the path of integrity.

We pray in Your sacred Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PAUL). The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, today the Senate is continuing to consider S. 1, a bill to approve the Keystone XL Pipeline, and there are six amendments pending, three from each side. We will begin voting on those amendments as soon as Chairman MURKOWSKI and Senator CANTWELL work

out an orderly schedule. Senators should expect votes throughout the day in relation to these amendments and any others in the queue.

POSITIVE CHANGES FOR THE MIDDLE CLASS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, last night, the American people heard two very different addresses. One was focused on the middle class and how Washington can work together in a serious way for better jobs, higher wages, and more opportunity. It was a call for constructive cooperation. It was a call for new ideas.

I wish to commend Senator ERNST for her thoughtful address. She understands the needs of working people in a way those of a particular mindset in Washington simply don't understand. She knows that the middle class is looking for Washington to function again and that hard-working Americans want DC to focus on their needs instead of the demands of powerful special interests. That is just what they told us in November when they sent this new Republican Congress here on their behalf.

I was hoping for something similar from President Obama—not identical, of course. We don't agree on all the issues; that is clear enough. But there are enough areas of common ground where we should be able to work together. It would have been most constructive if he had put the focus of his address on those areas of potential agreement. The moment of high purpose called for the leader of the free world to show America what could be accomplished through constructive, bipartisan engagement.

The State of the Union can be about more than veto threats or strident partisanship. This kind of partisanship is what we have become accustomed to from the President. We know the President may not be wild about the people's choice of a Congress, but he owes

it to the American people to find a serious way to work with the representatives they elected.

On some issues, such as cyber security, he sent a positive sign. He also began what I hope will be a sustained effort to move his own party forward to encourage them to work with us to help create more jobs by breaking down foreign trade barriers and allowing America to sell more of what it makes and grows.

Those were the good signs. But that was only part of the speech. There is not a lot serious lawmakers can do with talking points designed specifically not to pass. Members in both parties would have welcomed serious ideas about how to save and strengthen Medicare, how to protect Social Security for future generations, and how to balance the budget without tired tax hikes.

We listened closely for specific details on how he would work with both parties to achieve comprehensive tax simplification that focuses not on growing the government but on creating jobs.

The President has expressed some support for ideas such as this previously. He should have expanded on it last night. There is still time for him to do it. But whatever he chooses, the new Congress will continue working to send good ideas to his desk.

One of those good ideas is a bipartisan infrastructure project the Senate will resume working on today—the Keystone jobs bill. It is heartening to see a real debate and an amendment process on the floor of the Senate again. It is a result of a new spirit of reform that is being brought to Congress. It aims to give Members of both parties a stake in positive solutions so we can get Washington functioning again on behalf of our people.

We are looking to the President to join us in our positive mission for the middle class. It is what the American people just voted for last November. It

• This “bullet” symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



Printed on recycled paper.

S301